HELTER SKELTER

Monsters everywhere! Running around, falling from the sky, jumping from platforms. Monsters above, monsters below, monsters heading straight for you! Catch them if you can, and bounce on them while they're vulnerable - but be quick, because when the timer runs out your bouncing ball will burst.

LOADING & CONTROLS

Atari ST/Amiga
Insert the disk in the internal drive and reset the computer. You can play the game with one or two joysticks or using the keyboard (the mouse is used only in the screen designer, not the main game). Only one player can use the keyboard - use the left and right cursor keys to move, and the left shift key to jump.

IBM or compatibles
At the >A prompt type **HELTER** and press **Return**. The program should detect if your computer has CGA or EGA graphics but to load the CGA version directly type **HELTERC**; for the EGA version type **HELTERE**. For Hercules mode type **HELTERH**. You can play using a single joystick, or using the keyboard. In a one-player game the keys are left and right cursor, and the left shift key; in a two-player game Player 1 uses **A**, **S** and left shift, Player 2 uses **4**, **6** and right shift.

Commodore 64
To load from tape hold down the shift key and tap **Run/Stop**. Disk users should type **LOAD":*",8,1** and press **Return**. Play the game with a joystick in either port.

Spectrum
To load from tape type **LOAD""** - if you have a Plus 3 use the disk loader. Play the game using a joystick or the keys **N** and **M** to move left or right, and **Z** to jump. Two programs are supplied; the game and 80 predefined screens are on side 1, the screen editor is on side 2.

Amstrad CPC
Type **RUN"HELTER"** to load the game. Play using joysticks, or the keys **N** and **M** to move left and right, and **Z** to jump. Two programs are supplied; the game and 80 predefined screens are on side 1, the screen editor is on side 2.

GETTING STARTED

One or two can play. Screens 61 to 70 are impossible unless two are playing, and so these screens are skipped when only one person is playing. To begin to play press **F1** for a one-player game (**A** on a Spectrum or Amstrad), or **F2** for a two-player game (**F3** on a C64, **B** on Spectrum or Amstrad), then indicate the control you are using by selecting the appropriate option from the menu, or pressing the joystick fire button (or the jump key if you intend to use the keyboard).

Before the game begins you can enter a password which will allow you to start the game on a screen other than the first. Of course, when you first play you

won't know any passwords, so just press fire or the jump key to start the game.

HOW TO PLAY

You control a bouncing ball called Billy (in a two-player game the second player controls his cousin Bobby). Press left or right to propel him sideways, press the fire button or jump key to make him jump in the air.

Helter Skelter has 80 different screens for you to conquer. On each screen there are a number of monsters that wander around the screen along platforms and ledges. Sometimes monsters are trapped by walls, forced to remain on a particular ledge, but often they can roam from ledge to ledge, floating down to the ledge below whenever they fall off the edge.

All you need to do is squash the monsters with the ball before the countdown timer reaches zero. It couldn't be easier - or could it? The problem is, only one of the monsters (indicated by an arrow) is vulnerable at a time. Hit the wrong monster and it splits into two baby monsters, making your task even more difficult - but hit the right monster and you'll be that much closer to your target.

CONTROLLING THE BOUNCE

When you press jump, what actually happens is that the ball is subjected to a downward force. If the ball is on a ledge at the time this force squeezes the ball against the ledge, which means that it bounces up as soon as the force is removed.

If the ball is in the air and travelling downwards at the time you press the jump button it will obviously bounce higher next time it lands. However, if the ball is travelling up when you press jump, the downward force acts to slow the ball down rather than speed it up. It's often important to be able to do this, but of course, you have to get the timing right. An experienced player can make the ball stop dead by pressing the jump button a fraction of a second after the ball bounces, but hit it just too soon and the ball will bounce even higher!

SCORING

Each monster that you squash is worth between 500 and 8000 points. The first monster scores 500 points, but the next one is worth 1000 points, provided you don't hit a 'wrong' monster in between. The score keeps doubling so long as you don't hit a monster that splits into two, until the maximum of 8000 points is reached.

If you complete the screen before the time runs out you score a bonus of 1000 points for each second remaining. There's another bonus, the skill bonus, which varies from screen to screen and halves every time you press the jump button. By using as few jumps as possible you can score thousands of points in bonuses. With practice you'll find that you don't need to jump nearly as often as you do when you first begin playing.

Scoring 200,000 points awards an extra ball (you start with five); however, you cannot have more than ten balls remaining at any time.

TOKENS
Occasionally a spinning token will appear, bearing one of the letters **E-X-T-R-A**. Collect all five to earn a bonus ball - but beware, if you collect two letters the same they cancel each other out!

Other tokens also appear from time to time. If you collect them you can earn extra time, or else gain a temporary advantage. One token makes the monsters stand still for a time; another makes them all vulnerable simultaneously; yet another freezes the countdown timer. There's even a token that will take you straight to the next screen!

When you have squashed all the monsters on a screen the clock stops, allowing you to collect any remaining tokens before they disappear. Tokens collected after completing the screen score 1000 points each.

PASSWORDS
If you successfully complete the first ten screens a four letter password is revealed that allows you to start the game on screen 11 if you wish. Further passwords are revealed every ten screens. The password for screen 81, the first user-defined screen, is *user* (on the Spectrum and Amstrad the user-defined screens are designed using the program on the second side of the cassette and can be loaded into the main game).

SCREEN DESIGNER
One of the best features of *Helter Skelter* is the built-in screen designer, which allows you to create your own screens - devilishly difficult, subtly simple, wonderfully weird - you name it, you can do it! To enter the screen designer press **F10** (**F7** on the C64) when the title screen or high score screen is displayed. On the Spectrum and Amstrad the screen designer is a separate program on side 2 of the tape. **NOTE: first make sure that you have a blank tape or formatted disk to hand. DO NOT USE THE PROGRAM TAPE OR DISK!**

On the ST and Amiga the designer is mouse-controlled - move the pointer to the option you require, and press the left button to select it. On the IBM use a mouse or the cursor keys and **F1** and **F2** instead of the mouse buttons. On the C64 press the number key which corresponds to the option you require, and use the joystick to position an object - press fire to confirm the position. On the Spectrum or Amstrad use either joystick or keys to move the cursor (use **S** for Up and **X** for Down).

The first stage in designing a screen is to draw the platforms - each screen can have up to 64 platforms, each of which can be either horizontal or vertical (more complicated shapes must be built-up from several platforms). When you select *Platform* the options *Add Platform* and *Delete Platform* are displayed; to add a platform select that option, then position the pointer where you want one end of the platform to be and press the jump button. Now move the pointer to where you want the other end of the platform to be, remembering that it must be either vertical or horizontal, and press the button again. To cancel a partly-drawn

platform press the right button (**Run/Stop** on theC64, **Break** on the Spectrum, or **Esc** on the Amstrad), or select *Delete Platform*.

Once you have drawn the platforms, the next step is to decide how many monsters you want of each type, where they should start from, their initial direction, and their speed of movement. Select the *Monsters* option, then *Add monster*. Move the pointer to the appropriate platform and press the jump button; a monster will appear at the left end of the platform. You can now change the monster type using the right mouse button (**F2** on the IBM, left and right controls on C64, or up and down controls on Spectrum and Amstrad), then move the monster to the required starting position. Finally choose whether the monster begins moving left or right, then select a speed (0 is slowest, 7 fastest).

Once you have positioned all the monsters for the screen, you can change the order in which they must be squashed - normally the order in which you positioned them. The order you choose can make an enormous difference to the difficulty of a screen. Simply point to each monster in turn and press the left button, or jump button.

The starting position of the ball is important too: *Start positions* allows you to fix the start positions for both Billy and Bobby. Finally select *Parameters* which allows you to set the time allowed for either a one player or two player game, the probability that monsters will make random changes in direction, and the starting value of the skill bonus (this must be a round number, and is entered as so many hundreds, e.g. 100 for 10,000). Whenever you are entering numbers use the numeric keys on the main keyboard.

Screen select allows you to move to any of the user-defined screens. To copy a screen move to the screen you wish to copy to, and select *Copy screen*. Then move to the screen you wish to copy and choose either *Select* to effect the copy, or *Abort* if you have made a mistake. *Delete* will delete the currently displayed screen, moving all higher-numbered screens down one, *Insert* works in reverse, creating a blank screen and pushing higher-numbered screens up one.

When you are playing user-defined screens the + and - keys (on the numeric keypad if you are using an ST or Amiga) can be used to step through the screens. This makes it easier to test a specific screen. There's quite an art to designing screens - many of the built-in screens have ingenious solutions, and there's no reason why *your* screens shouldn't be as much fun to play!

Once you have designed your own screens you'll naturally want to save them to disk or tape. If you are using disk you'll need either a blank formatted disk, or a disk you have previously used for saving screens (if you haven't used the disk before to save screens select the option *Init disk* first - this creates six 'slots' on the disk, each of which can hold a complete set of 48 screens). Label the disk and make a note on the label when you use a slot, otherwise you might write over some of your favourite screens. Whether you are using disk or tape be sure not to use the program disk or tape for your saved screens!